



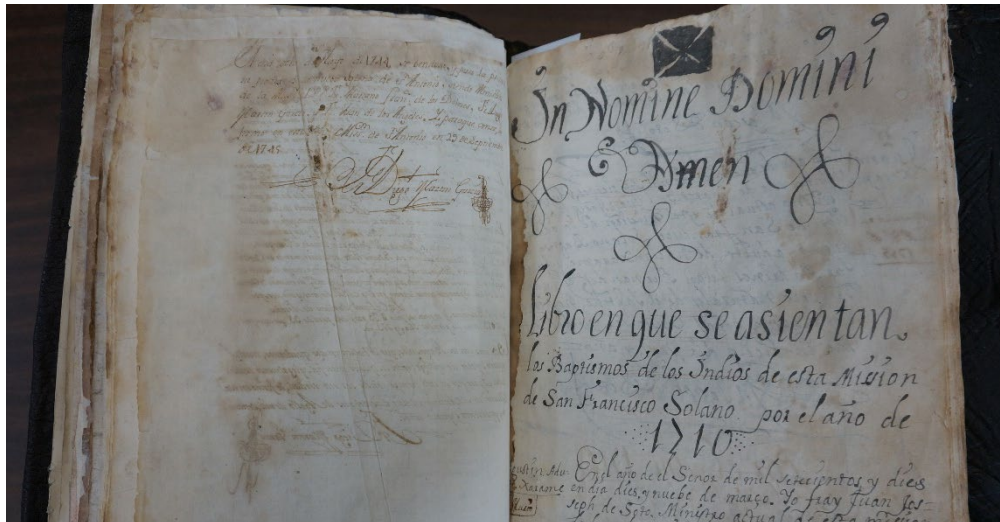
ARCHDIOCESE
OF SAN ANTONIO

Sacramental Records Policy and Procedures

Version 1.0 (2022)

Catholic Archdiocese of San Antonio
Archives & Records Management Office

www.archsa.org



DOCUMENT HISTORY

TITLE: Sacramento Records Policy and Procedures

PUBLICATION DATE: June 17, 2022

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, REVISIONS

REVISIONS

VERSION	DATE	REVISION
1.0	6/17/2022	

REVIEW CYCLE: Biennial

CONTACT: Elvira Sanchez Kisser, Elvira.kisser@archsa.org, (210) 743-1959

LETTER FROM THE ARCHBISHOP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Document History	2
Letter From The Archbishop	3
1 Introduction	9
2 Types of Records and Registers	9
2.1 Mission Church Registers.....	10
2.2 Catholic and Non-Catholic Institutions (hospitals, schools, special homes, etc.)	10
3 Ownership and Responsibility	10
3.1 Ownership and Copyright	10
3.2 Responsibility	10
3.3 Delegated Responsibility	10
3.4 Inspection and Certification of Registers.....	11
3.5 Inventories of Registers.....	11
3.6 Transfer of Older or Distressed Registers to Archdiocesan Archives.....	11
3.7 Records of Closed Parishes and Missions.....	11
3.8 Confidentiality.....	11
3.9 Access to Sacramental Records.....	11
3.10 Requests and Procedures	12
3.11 Access to Outside Agencies	12
3.12 Subpoenas	12
3.13 Requests from other Catholic Entities.....	13
3.14 Requests to Research Sacramental Records	13
4 Preservation of Registers	13
4.1 Format.....	13
4.2 Acid-Free Paper and Ink.....	13
4.3 Safe Storage	13
4.4 Removal of Registers	14
4.5 Repairs and Conservation	14
5 Recording Sacraments in the Parish of the Event	14
6 Celebrations Outside a Parish Church	15
6.1 Baptism	15
6.2 Marriage	15
6.3 Death	15
7 Notice of Sacraments.....	15

8	Style Guide for Entries in Registers.....	16
8.1	Label Registers	16
8.2	Entering Information	16
8.3	Timeliness	16
8.4	Legibility	16
8.5	Chronological Order	16
8.6	Register Columns.....	16
8.7	Index	17
8.8	Style for Names.....	17
8.9	Style for Dates.....	17
8.10	Entry of Minister’s Name.....	17
9	General Changes, Corrections, and Additions.....	17
9.1	Making Corrections.....	17
10	Making Changes	18
10.1	Additions to Entries/New Godparents or Sponsors* Exception	18
10.2	Missing Records.....	18
10.3	Supporting Documents	19
11	Sacramental Certificates	19
11.1	Church Use Only	19
11.2	Accuracy and Authentication	19
11.3	Absence of Information.....	20
11.4	Authorized Source of Records.....	20
11.5	Authorized Requests and Procedures (<i>see Chapter 3.10 Access to Sacramental Records</i>).....	20
11.6	Cost/Fees.....	20
11.7	Format.....	20
11.8	Updated Baptismal Certificates.....	20
11.9	Required Information	20
11.10	Information on Certificates after Changes.....	20
11.11	Confidential Information.....	21
12	Baptismal Registers	21
12.1	Baptismal Register Entries	21
12.2	Source of Information	21
12.3	Godparents/Sponsors.....	21
12.4	Visiting Clerics.....	22

12.5	Unmarried/Single Parents.....	22
12.6	Unknown Parentage.....	22
12.7	Ascription to Proper Church ‘Sui Iuris’	22
	12.7.1 Change of Rite (Ascription to an Eastern Catholic Church or Latin Church).....	23
12.8	Same-Sex Couples Presenting a Child for Baptism.....	23
13	Adoption and Baptism	23
13.1	Baptism before Adoption	24
13.2	Issuing Baptismal Certificates after an adoption is finalized.....	25
14	Special Types of Baptism.....	25
14.1	Conditional Baptism.....	25
14.2	Emergency Baptism	25
14.3	Emergency Baptism – Rites Supplied.....	26
14.4	Prison Baptism	26
15	Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).....	26
15.1	Definition of Terms	26
	15.1.1 RCIA.....	26
	15.1.2 Catechumens.....	26
	15.1.3 Elect	27
16	Sacraments of Initiation Entries.....	27
16.1	Register Entries for the Elect	27
	16.1.1 Baptismal Register.....	27
	16.1.2 First Eucharist Register.....	27
	16.1.3 Confirmation Register	27
16.2	Source of Information	28
17	Baptized Christians Received Into Full Communion	28
17.1	Register Entries for Those Received into Full Communion.....	28
	17.1.1 Baptismal Register.....	28
	17.1.2 First Eucharist Register.....	28
	17.1.3 Confirmation Register	28
17.2	Source of Information	29
17.3	Children of Parents Received into the Church	29
17.4	Source of Information	29
18	Special Notations in the Baptismal Register.....	29
18.1	Reception of Holy Orders	30
18.2	Dispensation from Holy Orders.....	30
18.3	Perpetual Profession in Religious Institute.....	30
18.4	Dispensation from Religious Vows	30
18.5	Vetitum / Monitum	30

18.6	Formal Withdrawals from the Catholic Church.....	30
19	Penance/Reconciliation.....	30
20	First Eucharist Records.....	31
20.1	Source Information.....	31
20.2	Notification of Sacrament.....	31
21	Confirmation Records.....	31
21.1	Source of Data.....	31
21.2	Notification of Confirmation.....	32
21.3	Joint Confirmation Celebrations.....	32
21.4	Confirmation Delegation/Rescript.....	32
22	Marriage Records.....	33
22.1	Marriage Entries.....	33
22.2	Pre-Nuptial Files.....	33
22.3	Supporting documentation in the prenuptial file should include:.....	33
22.4	Release of Pre-Nuptial File.....	34
22.5	Marriage in a Catholic Chapel or Oratory.....	34
22.6	Weddings With a Dispensation from Canonical Form.....	34
22.7	Convalidation.....	34
22.8	Radical Sanation.....	34
22.9	Citations in the Marriage Register Notation Column.....	35
22.10	Notification to Church of Baptism.....	35
23	Ordination Register.....	35
23.1	Notification of Ordination to the Church of Baptism.....	35
24	Death Register.....	35
24.1	Death Entries.....	35
24.2	Non-Catholic Burials.....	36
24.3	Cremation.....	36
25	Support to Our Parishes.....	36
26	APPENDIXES.....	37
	Table of Contents.....	37
27	GLOSSARY OF TERMS.....	66

1 INTRODUCTION

Sacramental records serve an important function in the Catholic Church. They document an individual's sacramental history and status in the Church. A sacramental record is created when an individual receives the following sacraments: Baptism, First Eucharist, Confirmation, Matrimony, and Holy Orders. The sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick is not recorded nor are certificates issued for these two sacraments.

Sacramental records are created and maintained by the pastor or appointed delegates when the sacrament is conferred. Sacramental records must be recorded in English on paper in bound volumes and the entries written by hand close to the time of the event and authenticated by the signature of the pastor. Original sacramental registers are never discarded. If the parish is unable to care for the registers, or other records, for any reason, the records are to be transferred to the Archives and Records Management Office (Archives) for permanent care.

All sacramental registers, and the information they contain, belong to the Archdiocese of San Antonio. Neither the originals, nor any copies of sacramental registers, nor the information they contain, whether on microfilm or otherwise, can ever be given, loaned, or sold without the written permission of the archbishop of the Archdiocese of San Antonio in Texas or his delegate.

Parish records are to be retained at the parish of origin. Under no pretext may anyone take sacramental registers when they leave the parish or transfer to another assignment. It is prohibited to loan sacramental registers to parishioners, genealogists, or other persons for any reason. Sacramental registers must be stored in a fire-resistant safe in the rectory, parish office, or church, but never in private homes.

This policy and procedure handbook is not intended as a complete statement of all sacramental record issues raised in canon law, civil law, and archival practice. For additional information, please contact the Archives and Record Management Office of the Archdiocese of San Antonio.

2 TYPES OF RECORDS AND REGISTERS

In the Archdiocese of San Antonio, parishes must keep the following sacramental registers: Baptismal, First Eucharist, Confirmation, Marriage, and Death. Two record books are to be maintained for The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: The Register of Catechumens and the Book of the Elect. Parishes may choose to also maintain Sick Call Registers. The archdiocese is to maintain an Ordination Register and register of Dispensation from Canonical Form.

2.1 MISSION CHURCH REGISTERS

A parish that has care of a mission church is to maintain a separate set of sacramental registers for the mission church. Mission registers may be held in the office of the parish.

2.2 CATHOLIC AND NON-CATHOLIC INSTITUTIONS (HOSPITALS, SCHOOLS, SPECIAL HOMES, ETC.)

Persons assigned as chaplains and clerics ministering at a Catholic or non-Catholic institution, such as a school, hospital, campus ministry, etc., are to record sacraments administered in the sacramental register of the territorial parish in which the institution is located, not the parish where the cleric is assigned.

Catholic Institutions, such as hospitals, schools, religious institutes, or retirement homes, are not to maintain sacramental registers or issue sacramental certificates, under any circumstances.

3 OWNERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY

3.1 OWNERSHIP AND COPYRIGHT

Ownership and copyright of all sacramental registers and records held in parishes, missions, and the Archdiocesan Archives belong to the Archbishop of San Antonio.

3.2 RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of the pastor to ensure that sacramental records are:

- Properly maintained and kept in accordance with established Archdiocesan policies.
- Clearly and promptly annotated.
- Properly preserved.
- Access complies with Archdiocesan policies.

3.3 DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITY

The pastor may choose to delegate the day-to-day administration of sacramental records to a responsible employee or volunteer. Such delegation must be given in writing and state the extent of the delegation. The person delegated is required to annually attend a Sacramental Records Training. To safeguard the privacy of the information contained in the registers, a limited number of trained delegates should have access to the sacramental registers.

The pastor is responsible for signing sacramental certificates and other documents regarding the canonical status of the faithful; however, a pastor may also choose to delegate a person(s) such as the parochial vicar, deacon, employee, or trusted volunteer to sign sacramental certificates or other documents regarding the canonical status of the faithful when the pastor is not available to do so. A letter of delegation is required, and the Office of the Chancellor must be notified of each person delegated to sign on behalf of the pastor. (See *Appendix A*)

3.4 INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION OF REGISTERS

It is the responsibility of pastors to ensure that entries in registers are complete and accurate. Quality control initiatives that double-check entries regularly will ensure accuracy. The pastor must review all entries in the register and certify their accuracy with his signature, even if he did not administer the sacrament. If entries to registers are not recorded by the pastor, then they should be certified by the pastor's initials and dated at the top or foot of the page.

All parish sacramental registers shall be inspected every other year by the Dean and certified with his signature and date of inspection on the front page of the register, including the last page number inspected. The Dean is to complete a *Dean Parish Inspection* form (See *Appendix B*) provided by the Chancellor, which they must return to the Chancellor's Office.

3.5 INVENTORIES OF REGISTERS

Parishes are to maintain a written inventory of the sacramental registers. Before the installation of a new pastor, the inventory is reviewed and updated, and a copy is sent to the Archives. (See *Appendix C*)

3.6 TRANSFER OF OLDER OR DISTRESSED REGISTERS TO ARCHDIOCESAN ARCHIVES

All sacramental registers 100 years old and older are to be transferred to the archdiocesan archives for safekeeping. If a register has deteriorated to the point where the structure or information is in danger, the pastor is to contact the Archives to assist in determining what preservation is needed, which may include the transfer of the register to the Archives.

All sacramental registers transferred to the archives will be maintained by the Archives staff. The archivist will assume responsibility for entering all notations and issuing certificates for those registers. All future requests for records from these registers should be directed to the Archives.

3.7 RECORDS OF CLOSED PARISHES AND MISSIONS

In the event a parish or mission is closed, the sacramental registers will be assessed and inventoried by the Archives staff for appropriate retention, then transferred to the parish which assumes parochial responsibility for issuing future sacramental certificates.

3.8 CONFIDENTIALITY

Sacramental records are private records and the private property of the Archdiocese of San Antonio. It is the responsibility of the Archdiocese of San Antonio, acting through the clergy of the various parishes, to supervise how records are used, by whom, and for what purposes.

3.9 ACCESS TO SACRAMENTAL RECORDS

The pastor or delegated parish personnel can examine the registers and issue the required information directly to the following requestors:

- a. Any person requesting their sacramental record.
- b. The parent of a minor child or a legally qualified guardian who is requesting a copy of a sacramental record.
- c. A priest, parish, tribunal office, or other Catholic institution that is requesting an authorized copy of a sacramental record for official Church purposes.

3.10 REQUESTS AND PROCEDURES

Sacramental certificate requests should be made in writing, to ensure that the information provided is complete. They may be submitted by email, mail, or phone call.

The requestor must provide:

1. The name of the requestor (including maiden name)
2. The name of the parents, including the mother's maiden name
3. Date of birth
4. Reason for the request (See *3.11 Access to Outside Agencies and Research* below)
5. Other pertinent information that would aid in locating the person's sacramental record entry.

Once the sacramental certificate is ready to be picked up, a government-issued photo ID (e.g., Driver's license, State ID, Military ID, Passport) should be used as verification of the identity of the person requesting the sacramental record. If the requestor is unable to pick it up from the parish, the certificate may be mailed to a Catholic parish near them with instructions to contact the person named in the certificate and verify their identity at the time of pick-up. For circumstances outside this instance, please contact the Archives to make arrangements.

3.11 ACCESS TO OUTSIDE AGENCIES

Requests for a sacramental certificate to be submitted to a government agency or corporate entity (i.e., Social Security Administration, Immigration, insurance companies, etc.) require a signed and notarized *Authorization for Release of Information* (See *Appendix D*) form from the person, or a legally qualified guardian, whose record is being requested. Please make sure all requestors either complete and sign this form at the parish or are given the form to have notarized and returned. Send all forms along with a copy of the sacramental certificate to the Archives for verification.

Requests received directly from a government agency or corporate entity should be directed to the Archives.

3.12 SUBPOENAS

If a parish receives a court-issued subpoena to hand over Church records, you may accept the subpoena, but never **under any circumstances** hand over the records to the server of the subpoena. Immediately call the Director of Risk Management for assistance.

3.13 REQUESTS FROM OTHER CATHOLIC ENTITIES

Requests from other Catholic entities, such as tribunals or Catholic seminaries, should be handled directly with that entity. When preparing these sacramental certificates include all notations listed in the register and mark the certificate/document “For Canonical Investigation Only” in red ink.

3.14 REQUESTS TO RESEARCH SACRAMENTAL RECORDS

Requests to research sacramental registers must be referred to the Archives and Records Management Office. The archives provide genealogical/research assistance through online resources, to relieve parish personnel of the responsibility, preserve the originals from wear, and ensure that researchers receive proper supervision.

4 PRESERVATION OF REGISTERS

Sacramental registers are to be maintained permanently, hence, the selection of quality registers and proper storage is important to ensure long-term preservation. Below are guidelines to assist you, or you may contact the Archives and Records Management Office for further assistance.

4.1 FORMAT

Sacramental records are to be recorded on paper in bound volumes. A parish may maintain separate Baptismal, First Eucharist, Confirmation, Marriage, and Death Registers, or may use combined registers, depending on the needs of the parish. Territorial parishes are responsible for mission Church registers.

4.2 ACID-FREE PAPER AND INK

Sacramental registers should have bindings and paper of a quality that is considered permanent, durable, and acid-free. Writing instruments should be ink that is fade-proof, waterproof, acid-free, and **black**. Never use felt-tip pens, pencils, or fine-point pens.

4.3 SAFE STORAGE

Sacramental registers should be kept in a secure fire-resistant safe and climate-controlled environment, with limited fluctuations in temperature and humidity. Parish offices should take steps to avoid high temperatures, dampness, bright light, and fluorescent light. Never store registers in attics, basements, outside sheds, or storage units of any kind.

Based on nationally accepted archival practice, the space where these records are kept should be 70° degrees or colder with a relative humidity of 40%. All safes, file cabinets, or other record container housing, must have a minimum fire resistance of two hours.¹

4.4 REMOVAL OF REGISTERS

Registers may not be taken off the parish premises except for duplicating by the Archdiocesan Archives or for safekeeping by the pastor in the event of a disaster or emergency.

4.5 REPAIRS AND CONSERVATION

To maintain the registers for as long as possible, limit the number of harmful products used in the registers. Do not use tape of any kind to repair registers without the approval of the Archives. Refrain from using sticker labels, post-it notes, staples, paper clips, glue, or rubber bands on registers. In addition, laminating the registers is never permitted.

Worn registers are to be rebound by a professional binder approved by the Archives. Rebinding that destroys any data or renders any part of the records unusable is unacceptable. If a register is falling apart and requires conservation work, please contact the Archives for recommendations of vendors for preservation and bookbinding.

When a register is beyond repair, and a parish can no longer properly maintain it, the Archives will assist in creating a copy of the register for the parish and the original will be transferred to the Archives. Please report the loss or destruction of any sacramental register immediately to the Archives and note it in the parish *Sacramental Register Inventory*.

5 RECORDING SACRAMENTS IN THE PARISH OF THE EVENT

Sacraments should be recorded in the registers of the parish where the sacrament was conferred, unless otherwise specifically stated in this policy and procedure handbook. For example, if Parish A is closed for renovation and all sacraments are conferred at Parish B for several months, those events should be recorded in the records of Parish B, since that is the parish where the sacraments were conferred.

This rule also applies in instances where one parish hosts a confirmation preparation or RCIA candidates for multiple parishes. The record of the sacraments is recorded in the register of the parish where the sacrament was conferred, not the candidates' home parish.

In these cases, it is acceptable for the home parish to make a note in their register of the fact that the parishioner received the sacrament and where it is recorded. The parish should not make a duplicate record, but a simple note in the index to direct others to the actual location of the record.

¹ Pacifico, M.F. & Wilsted, T. (2009). *Archival and Special Collections Facilities: guidelines for archivists, librarians, architects, and engineers*. Society of American Archivists.

Example: Smith, John, baptized May 10, 1995, see Immaculate Heart of Mary, San Antonio, TX

6 CELEBRATIONS OUTSIDE A PARISH CHURCH

When a sacrament is administered in a place other than a parish church (for example, a campus chapel, a private home, or a hospital), the following procedures apply.

6.1 BAPTISM

Baptisms are to be recorded in the Baptismal Register of the territorial parish in which the baptism took place. A cross-reference may be made in the family's home parish Baptism Register index for ease in locating the record in the future.

6.2 MARRIAGE

When permission has been granted for a Marriage that follows canonical form to take place outside the parish church, it is to be recorded in the Marriage Register of the territorial parish in which the marriage took place. The pre-nuptial investigation file will be permanently stored in the parish where the marriage is recorded.

In the case of a wedding celebrated with a *Dispensation from Canonical Form*, the Marriage shall be recorded in two places:

1. In the parish of the Catholic party whose pastor conducted the pre-nuptial investigation about the free status of the parties and requested the dispensation. The pre-nuptial investigation file will be permanently stored at this parish.
2. In the chancery of the diocese which granted the *Dispensation from Canonical Form*.

6.3 DEATH

All Catholic funeral liturgies, even if celebrated outside a church building, shall be entered in the parish Death Register where the cleric is assigned.

7 NOTICE OF SACRAMENTS

Notice of sacraments may be sent or received in the form of a letter, e-mail, card, or other written form of communication. Notices sent and received should be recorded without delay. A notice sent must contain the following information:

1. The individual sending the notice: name, title, and full contact information
2. Name of the individual having received the sacrament
3. Date and place of individual's baptism
4. The parish where the sacrament took place, including the address
5. Name of sacrament received, date of reception, and officiating minister

Once sacramental information has been entered into the register, the notice should be deleted or shredded.

8 STYLE GUIDE FOR ENTRIES IN REGISTERS

To ensure that sacramental records are accurate, legible, and easy to locate, parishes are required to do the following:

8.1 LABEL REGISTERS

On the first page of each register, enter the name of the parish, city, state, date span of the register (the end date is written when the register is full), the sacrament, and book number if there is one (e.g., Baptismal Book 3 or Baptism Vol. III).

Example: St. Agnes, San Antonio, Texas, Baptismal Register, Vol. 1, October 7, 1923, to March 2, 1935

8.2 ENTERING INFORMATION

All entries shall be written in English. Enter only that information prescribed by Canon Law, this policy, and any other information necessary for a complete and accurate sacramental record.

8.3 TIMELINESS

Entries of sacramental celebrations should be made in the appropriate register promptly once the sacrament has been conferred.

8.4 LEGIBILITY

Entries must be plainly and legibly printed. Do not use cursive or elaborate scripts.

8.5 CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Entries should be made in chronological order, except for those instances of unusual or extenuating circumstances. If the chronological order cannot be kept in a particular case, a small note should be made in the proper chronological location in the register, cross-referencing the actual entry.

Example: See RODRIGUEZ, Margaret pg. 37

8.6 REGISTER COLUMNS

Enter the data following the proper column headings in the register.

8.7 INDEX

Every entry is to be listed in the register's index, according to the person's last name. For the index entry, the last name of the individual should be printed in upper case for ease of locating the correct entry (e.g., "RODRIGUEZ MARTINEZ, Amelia").

8.8 STYLE FOR NAMES

Use the format of the name as verified on the official paperwork presented, such as a birth certificate or hospital record. The name in the Baptism Register should be the same name used for all future sacramental records for the individual.

8.9 STYLE FOR DATES

Print the name of the month rather than use the month's number and use four digits for the year for the date of the sacrament. (e.g., August 20, 2013, rather than 8/20/13). Entries in the notation column should use the following format (DD/MM/YYYY) to save space.

8.10 ENTRY OF MINISTER'S NAME

The name of the cleric who conferred the sacrament is to be clearly printed in the register entry and signed above his printed name. If a pastor delegates another cleric, such delegation must be entered in the priest or notation column. (See *Appendix K.3*)

9 GENERAL CHANGES, CORRECTIONS, AND ADDITIONS

Information is considered official and permanent, once entered into a sacramental register.

Mistakes and changes to a record will inevitably occur, but it is important to document the changes made to the record and to keep documentation that establishes such changes. Arbitrary changes destroy the value of the record by questioning the authenticity of the information. Below are the special conditions in which an entry may be changed. Only records for a living person can be changed.

9.1 MAKING CORRECTIONS

In case of a clerical error (i.e., the spelling of a name, date out of sequence, etc.) at the time of entry that is immediately obvious to the pastor and can be verified with documentation originally provided; a correction in the original entry may be made. Permitted corrections include correcting dates, names, and spellings. In cases of doubt, contact the Archives.

To make these corrections, draw a thin black line through the word, number, or letter to be changed and print the change immediately above or below the error. All corrections to a record must be visible and initialed by the pastor. (See *Appendix J.1*)

Example: SMITH ^{*LW*} 1/1/2021
SMITHE

10 MAKING CHANGES

Substantial changes (for example, to record an adoption after baptism, legal name change, or wrong dates) require proof in the form of documentation, which will consist of an original, embossed/sealed birth certificate or court order from a civil or ecclesiastical office, or government agency, etc. The notation is to include the issuing agency/court, including county and state, the date of the certificate/court order, and any case number. (See *Appendix J.3*)

To update the sacramental record entry, do the following:

- Place brackets [] around the original information.
- Write the new information above or below the bracketed information.
- Note type of proof in the notation column, including issuing agency/court, date of the certificate, and any case number.
- Place a copy of supporting documentation in a separate file associated with the specific sacramental register labeled “*Supporting Documents File, Parish Name, Book Type, Volume #, Date Range.*”
- The parish name, city, register title, number or volume, page, and entry number should be written on the supporting documents.

10.1 ADDITIONS TO ENTRIES/NEW GODPARENTS OR SPONSORS* EXCEPTION

For children still in the formative period of Christian life (infancy to age 14), parents may request a substitute sponsor for the original baptismal sponsor by petitioning the diocesan bishop. The following criteria apply:

- 1) The substitute must be qualified according to the canonical norm.
- 2) Original sponsors have been impeded by death, serious illness, a radical departure from faith, or they were chosen by the child’s natural parents and are unknown to the adoptive parents.

If approved, the diocesan bishop will authorize the change to the record and the name of the substitute sponsor will be cross-referenced in the *Supporting Documents File*.

10.2 MISSING RECORDS

At times, when a certificate is requested, the record in question cannot be found. If there is any possibility that the sacrament was conferred in some other parish, the inquirer is encouraged to check the sacramental records of that other parish or other parishes and consult the archdiocesan Archives. If the record cannot be located, then a serious investigation into the fact of the sacrament should be initiated by the pastor.

If proof is provided through a written statement or affidavit of a witness, such as a parent, sponsor, or another adult witness, a sacramental record can be created. Only the information for which a witness can vouch with certainty should be entered in the register, even though

doing so may leave an entry incomplete. The name of the witness, the date of testimony, and the words, "Missing record based on the testimony of [witness name and date of testimony]" is to be printed in the notation column of the register. All supporting documents should be included in that register's *Supporting Documents File*. (See *Appendix J.2*)

Examples of acceptable proof include:

- Photographs and/or videos of the event.
- Copy of the original baptismal certificate.
- A parent, godparent, sponsor, presiding cleric, or witness of the event can submit a notarized affidavit that includes information about the event. (See *Appendix E-H*)
- Parish bulletins that record the event

The name should also be added to the register index in the volume where the record should have been recorded with a cross-reference to the correct register.

Example: MARTINEZ, Isabel See Vol. 7 entry 32

10.3 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Legal documents supporting notations in Baptism Registers must be kept **permanently** in the corresponding register's *Supporting Documents File*. Label file with the name of parish, city, the title of register, dates covered, and volume number.

11 SACRAMENTAL CERTIFICATES

A certificate is an official document certifying that a particular individual has received one of the following sacraments: Baptism, First Eucharist, Confirmation, Marriage, or Ordination. Certificates are not to be issued for Penance/Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, or Death. The certificate is an **exact duplicate** of the information entered in the sacramental register. (See *Appendix I*)

11.1 CHURCH USE ONLY

Sacramental certificates are intended for internal church use, not for civil or legal purposes. Since certain information may be entered in the sacramental registers based purely on the word of someone else, (for example paternity) the sacramental certificate is simply repeating that information but not certifying it as true. (For other reasons to issue, see *Chapter 3.11 Access to Outside Agencies*)

11.2 ACCURACY AND AUTHENTICATION

An authenticated document must include the pastor's signature and parish seal. Stamps of the pastor's signature is not acceptable. Certificates must be accurate, legible (preferably typewritten), and complete, including **all** notations, except in cases of adoption. Photocopies, facsimiles, and digital copies of certificates are not considered authenticated documents.

11.3 ABSENCE OF INFORMATION

No field should be left blank on the certificate. When information is absent it shall be indicated by the words “none” or “not given”, rather than by leaving the space blank.

11.4 AUTHORIZED SOURCE OF RECORDS

Only the parish or the Archives holding the original sacramental records may issue a certificate. When creating a sacramental certificate, always retrieve the information from the *original* register, rather than a reproduction on microfilm or a digital copy.

11.5 AUTHORIZED REQUESTS AND PROCEDURES (SEE CHAPTER 3.10 ACCESS TO SACRAMENTAL RECORDS)

11.6 COST/FEEs

A parish may charge a maximum of \$5 to issue a sacramental certificate, including any mailing expenses. A fee should not be charged when another parish requests a sacramental certificate for Church purposes.

11.7 FORMAT

Certificates must have an official appearance and must be issued in a consistent format. All certificates must bear the name and address of the parish, the date issued, the pastor's signature, and the parish seal.

11.8 UPDATED BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATES

All requests for certificates to verify the status of a person in the Church are to be issued using the same formatted baptismal certificate which will include all notations included in the Baptismal Register. This includes all those received into Full Communion with the Church. (See *Appendix I.6*)

11.9 REQUIRED INFORMATION

Certificates are to include all information contained in the sacramental register, except that which is confidential (See *Chapter 11.11 Confidential Information*). All data in the notation's column are to be included. If there is no data in the notation column, the words “No Notations” should be printed on the certificate.

11.10 INFORMATION ON CERTIFICATES AFTER CHANGES

Once specific information has been changed in the sacramental register, the original data is no longer transcribed onto certificates. Information in the notation column related to the change will be transcribed on the certificate.

11.11 CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

The information which is confidential and should not be included on certificates is to be so marked when entered in the register (e.g., "Confidential – do not include on certificate.") Along with any information about adoption.

12 BAPTISMAL REGISTERS

12.1 BAPTISMAL REGISTER ENTRIES

The Baptismal Register serves as the "master record" for a person's individual sacramental history and status in the Church. Therefore, notations of sacraments received after baptism are also recorded in the Baptismal Register. (See *Appendix J*)

For baptisms celebrated, the following information is to be entered in the Baptismal Register.

- a. Full legal name, including any middle name, maiden name in parenthesis for a married female, and married last name
- b. Date and place (city and state) of birth
- c. Full legal name of parents, including the mother's maiden name
- d. Names of the sponsor(s), godparent(s), or Christian witness
- e. Date and place (city and state) of baptism
- f. Name of the minister

12.2 SOURCE OF INFORMATION

A government-issued birth certificate should be the primary source of information. If a birth certificate is impossible to obtain, an official hospital record or an affidavit from a person knowledgeable about the birth. The parent(s) or guardian of the child should verify the baptized person's name, date of birth, and place of birth submitted. Inability to provide a birth certificate or other verifying documents is not cause for denial or delay of baptism. When a birth certificate or hospital record is **not** available, then add the notation "*No legal documents were presented for the circumstance of birth.*"

12.3 GODPARENTS/SPONSORS

There is to be only one male or one female sponsor or one of each. Therefore, no more than two names may be entered in the "Godparents" or "Sponsors" column.

A baptized person who is not a member of the Catholic Church may serve as "a Christian Witness" together with a Catholic sponsor. A Catholic who does not fulfill the requirements for a sponsor may not serve as a Christian Witness. The Christian Witness' name is entered into the register with the abbreviation "CW" next to their name. A baptized Eastern Orthodox may serve as a godparent/sponsor.

When a godparent/sponsor is unable to be present in person for the baptism, a proxy may be appointed by the parents to participate in the rite of baptism. The name(s) of the sponsor(s)

and the proxy will be entered in the sacramental record book. The sponsor(s) name(s) will be written under the sponsor column. The name of the proxy will be written in the notation column with the word "Proxy" afterward. (See *Appendix K.2*) Transcribe only the sponsor(s) names onto the Baptismal certificate.

12.4 VISITING CLERICS

When a priest or deacon baptizes an individual in a Catholic Church to which he is not assigned, he is responsible for providing the necessary documentation to the parish where the baptism is conferred and recorded. If the family is registered in another parish, notification shall be sent to their home parish requesting the baptism to be entered into the Baptism Register Index only, with a cross-reference to the parish where the actual baptismal record can be found.

12.5 UNMARRIED/SINGLE PARENTS

If a child is born to an unmarried mother, the name of the mother is to be inserted in the Baptismal Register. The name of the father shall be inserted in the register if his paternity has been proven either by some public document or by his declaration before the pastor and two witnesses. If these conditions are not met, the field or column for the child's unknown father or mother should be filled with the words "not given" rather than leaving the space blank. It is not permitted to make an annotation that states "illegitimate." (See *Appendix K.3*)

12.6 UNKNOWN PARENTAGE

For children whose parentage cannot be known, or is unknown through any civil documentation, please contact the Chancellor's office.

12.7 ASCRIPTION TO PROPER CHURCH 'SUI IURIS'

Transferring from an Eastern Church to the Latin Church is a complex process. The following is to assist in understanding this situation. Please call the Chancellor's office when presented with this situation for guidance.

Through the reception of baptism, the child of parents who belong to the Latin Church is ascribed to the Latin Church. However, if one parent belongs to an Eastern Catholic Church, and the other to the Latin Church, the child is ascribed to the Church both parents have chosen by mutual agreement. If there is no mutual agreement, the child is ascribed to the Church to which the father belongs.

If only one parent is Catholic, the child is ascribed to the Church (Latin or Eastern Catholic Church) to which the Catholic parent belongs. In cases of adoption, when a child baptized into an Eastern Catholic Church is adopted by a person/couple who belongs to the Latin Church, or vice versa and the child is under the age of fourteen, permission is required from the bishop (of the Latin church) and patriarch (with authority over the Eastern Church).

Anyone to be baptized who has completed the fourteenth year of age can freely choose to be ascribed to the Latin Church or an Eastern Catholic Church. In that case, the person belongs to the Church to which he or she has chosen.

12.7.1 Change of Rite (Ascription to an Eastern Catholic Church or Latin Church)

This notation is made when a person transfers from an Eastern Catholic Church to the Latin Church, or vice versa.

Usually, special permission is required from the Holy See to transfer from an Eastern Catholic Church. When that permission has been granted the notation will include the name of the congregation issuing the permission, the protocol number, and the date. The notation should follow the instructions in the permission letter.

For example:

“Transfer of rite from (Church transferring from) to (Church transferring to), Congregation for Eastern Churches, protocol number and date”. (See *Appendix K.4*)

12.8 SAME-SEX COUPLES PRESENTING A CHILD FOR BAPTISM

It is not possible to register two mothers or two fathers in the parent column of the register. Likewise, it is not possible for a “transgender father,” whose real nature is a woman, or a “transgender mother,” whose real nature is a man, to be annotated in the parent column along with a same-sex partner.

If one of the parents is the child’s natural father or mother, he or she must be recorded in the parent column, the other parent is annotated in the notations column only if they have legally adopted the child. Adoption information will be recorded, as in any other adoption.²

If neither parent is the natural parent, only one adoptive parent may be recorded in the parent column of the Baptismal Register. The other adoptive parent will be listed in the notation column, along with the adoption information.³ (See *Appendix K.6*)

13 ADOPTION AND BAPTISM

Adopting parents are encouraged to postpone baptism until after the adoption has been finalized, except in extraordinary circumstances, such as danger of death.

For children baptized after adoption, no reference to the adoption or the natural parents is to be made in the Baptismal Register. Any such information which has been recorded is to be

² Pontifical Council Legislative Texts, Protocol No. 15986/2017 (November 15, 2017). Vatican Dicastery, Rome.

³ Canon 877, §3, Recording the Baptism of Adopted Children and the USCCB established complementary norms that were placed into effect on December 1, 2000 (<https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/canon-law/complementary-norms/canon-877-3-recording-the-baptism-of-adopted-children>).

treated as confidential and is not to be included on any certificate. Baptismal certificates for adopted children will be no different from other baptismal certificates. No mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the baptismal certificate.⁴

Parish personnel having access to parish registers have an obligation not to disclose to any person information which would identify or reveal, directly or indirectly, the fact that a person was adopted.⁵

13.1 BAPTISM BEFORE ADOPTION

For children who were baptized in the Catholic Church by their natural parent(s) before adoption, the following information shall be added to the original Baptismal Register entry after the adoption is finalized:

- a. Brackets [] shall be placed around the names of the natural parents.
- b. The legal name(s) of the adoptive parent(s) shall then be added.
- c. The child's former surname shall also be bracketed, and the new surname added.
- d. Sponsor(s) or godparent(s) will be bracketed and not included on the certificate. If the sponsor (s) are still part of the child's life, they may remain in the entry and on the certificate.
- e. A notation shall be made that the child was legally adopted, including the adoption case number, court, county, state, and date.
- f. In the index, a new entry with a new surname should be entered with an entry number.

If the adoptive parent's home parish is the same as the parish of baptism, a new entry does not have to be made. (See *Appendix K.12*)

For adoptive parents whose home parish is different from the parish of baptism, a **new entry** should be made in their home parish Baptismal Register with a cross-reference to the old entry.

New entry information to be entered:

- a. The new, legal name of the child as designated by the court order
- b. The name of the adoptive parent(s) (first, middle, and surname/maiden name)
- c. The date and place of birth (city and state)
- d. The date and place of baptism
- e. The name of the minister
- f. Notation of original baptism, (for example, *Original Entry see Sacred Heart, Chicago, IL, Vol. 5, pg. 15, entry 45*)

⁴ Canon 877, §3, Recording the Baptism of Adopted Children and USCCB Complementary Norms.

⁵ Adoption records prior to the USCCB Complimentary Norms on adoption that went into effect on December 1, 2000, may be recorded differently and information may be missing. Please contact the Archives and Records Management Office for assistance with these records.

Once all changes have been made to the register, a new baptismal certificate should be issued. The new entry will be used for notating future sacraments. (See *Appendix K.13a-b*)

13.2 ISSUING BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATES AFTER AN ADOPTION IS FINALIZED

Baptismal certificates issued by the parish for adopted children will be no different from other baptismal certificates. No mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the baptismal certificate.

Baptismal certificates issued by the parish for these individuals should list:

- a. Name(s) of the adoptive parent(s)
- b. Child's new legal name
- c. Date and place of birth
- d. Date and place of baptism
- e. Name of minister
- f. Sponsor(s) name(s) should be withheld if chosen by the natural parents and the adoptive parents have no relationship with them.

The name(s) of the natural parents and the sponsor(s) shall not be given, and no mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the baptismal certificate. The certificate is issued from the record created after the adoption. No certificate should ever be issued from the record created before adoption.

For other issues regarding creating records for adoptive individuals, please contact the Archives for assistance.

14 SPECIAL TYPES OF BAPTISM

14.1 CONDITIONAL BAPTISM

When conditional baptism is conferred, "Conditional Baptism" is to be written in the notation's column. Otherwise, the entry is the same as for any other baptism. (See *Appendix K.7*)

Baptisms in other Christian faiths are presumed valid until the contrary is demonstrated. Consult the Chancellor with any question as to whether or not a faith community's baptism is valid. Only after careful investigation and, if a positive doubt remains as to the fact of baptism or its valid celebration, a person is conditionally baptized. This conditional baptism is done privately, with only the essential participants and a simple, discrete ceremony.

14.2 EMERGENCY BAPTISM

When baptism is conferred in an emergency, ceremonies may be supplied later. The baptism is recorded in the territorial parish where the emergency baptism occurred. (See *Appendix K.8*)

14.3 EMERGENCY BAPTISM – RITES SUPPLIED

If the ceremonies are supplied at a later date⁶, a notation of “Rites supplied” with the date and place where the rites were given shall be entered in the margin of the child’s baptismal record entry and the entry shall be updated with missing information.

Rites Supplied is the completion of the rite of baptism in a parish for infants already baptized when in danger of death. The record of the “Rites Supplied” shall be sent with all corresponding information to the parish where the emergency baptism is recorded. Include a notation: “rites supplied,” with the parish, city, and state and the date of the completion of the celebration.

The child’s name may be entered into the Baptism Register index of the parents’ parish, with a cross-reference to the location of the baptismal record. (See *Appendix K.9*)

14.4 PRISON BAPTISM

There are several prisons located within the Archdiocese of San Antonio, Texas. Each facility has its own rules about whether baptisms are allowed to occur. In those instances when a Catholic cleric is allowed to administer the sacrament of baptism, it should be recorded in the Baptismal Register of the parish in whose territory the prison is located.

15 RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA)

15.1 DEFINITION OF TERMS

15.1.1 RCIA

Outside of emergency situations, non-baptized adults and children who have reached the age of reason (usually about seven years of age) seeking initiation into the Catholic Church are required to participate in a process of formation governed by the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). RCIA culminates in the celebration of the three sacraments of initiation – baptism, confirmation, and first reception of the eucharist – in the same ceremony. Information concerning those who receive the sacraments of initiation shall be recorded in the Baptismal, First Eucharist, and Confirmation Registers.

15.1.2 Catechumens

A catechumen is a person not yet baptized, who has celebrated the “Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens” as part of the RCIA. The name of the catechumen, along with the names of the sponsor, officiating minister, and date and place of the celebration, is entered into the Register of Catechumens at the parish where the Rite was celebrated. Note that

⁶ cf. 2020 Order of Baptism of Children No.31.3

already-baptized candidates for full communion and confirmation are not catechumens and their names are not placed in the Catechumenal Book.

15.1.3 Elect

An “elect” person is a catechumen who has celebrated the “Rite of Election or Enrollment of names” as part of the RCIA, and so has been chosen by the Church to receive the sacraments of initiation. The name of the elect catechumen, along with the names of the sponsor, officiating minister, and date and place of the celebration, is entered into a special Book of the Elect at the parish where the Rite was celebrated. *Note that already-baptized candidates for full communion and confirmation are not catechumens and do not become members of the Elect, and these persons’ names are not placed in the “Book of the Elect.”*

16 SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION ENTRIES

Once the elect receives the Sacraments of Initiation, their names are to be recorded in the Baptismal Register, First Eucharist Register, Confirmation Register, and Marriage Register for those whose marriage will be convalidated or sanated in the parish in which the sacraments were celebrated. The baptismal sponsor typically also serves as the sponsor for confirmation.

16.1 REGISTER ENTRIES FOR THE ELECT

16.1.1 Baptismal Register

- a. The legal name of the person (if married, place the woman’s maiden name in parenthesis).
- b. The names of the parents (first, middle, and surname/maiden name)
- c. The date and place of birth (city and state)
- d. The name(s) of the sponsor
- e. The date and place of baptism (including city and state)
- f. The name of the minister
- g. Marginal notation of reception of eucharist and confirmation and marital status (either current valid marriage or the convalidation of the current civil marriage). Any declaration of invalidity (including where granted and protocol number) should also be noted.

16.1.2 First Eucharist Register

- a. The baptismal name of the person
- b. The parents named on the baptismal certificate
- c. The date and place of baptism (including city and state)
- d. The date and place of the first eucharist
- e. The name of the minister

16.1.3 Confirmation Register

- a. The baptismal name of the person
- b. The parents named on the baptismal certificate

- c. The date and place of baptism (including city and state)
- d. The name of the sponsor
- e. The date and place of confirmation
- f. The name of the minister
- g. Optional confirmation name.

16.2 SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Legal names should be verified with current government-issued photo identification to verify their name and date of birth. A birth certificate should also be presented to verify the parents' names and place of birth.

17 BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS RECEIVED INTO FULL COMMUNION

For those having been received into Full Communion into the Church, the date and place of their reception is to be entered into the Baptismal Register, including any baptismal information and notations for all sacraments received. (See *Appendix K.10*)

17.1 REGISTER ENTRIES FOR THOSE RECEIVED INTO FULL COMMUNION

17.1.1 Baptismal Register

- a. The baptismal name of the person
- b. The parent(s) named on the baptismal certificate
- c. The date and place of birth (city and state)
- d. The name(s) of the sponsor(s) for baptism and; Name of the sponsor for Profession of Faith, include POF: name.
- e. The date and place of their baptism (including parish, city, and state) and the "Profession of Faith" date and place ceremonies were supplied to effect formal reception into the Church
- f. The name of the minister of baptism
- g. In the notation's column any data on the reception of the first eucharist, confirmation; marital status (either current valid marriage or the convalidation of the current marriage); and any declaration of invalidity (including where granted and protocol number)

17.1.2 First Eucharist Register

- a. The baptismal name of the person
- b. The parents named on the baptismal certificate
- c. The date and place of baptism (including city and state)
- d. The date and place of the first eucharist
- e. The name of the minister

17.1.3 Confirmation Register

- a. The baptismal name of the person

- b. The parents named on the baptismal certificate
- c. The date and place of baptism (including city and state)
- d. The name of the sponsor
- e. The date and place of confirmation
- f. The name of the minister
- g. Optional confirmation name

17.2 SOURCE OF INFORMATION

All candidates' information should be verified with a government-issued ID. If a baptismal certificate is unavailable or incomplete, the legal name should be verified with current government-issued photo identification to verify their name and date of birth. And a birth certificate should also be presented to verify the parents' names and place of birth.

17.3 CHILDREN OF PARENTS RECEIVED INTO THE CHURCH

Children validly baptized in a non-Catholic Christian church, who have not yet reached the age of reason (seven) may be received into full communion when one or both of their parents is received into full communion. Children below the age of reason do not need to make a Profession of Faith. (See *Appendix K.11*)

The child's name is entered into the Baptismal Register with the following information:

- a. The baptismal name of the child
- b. The parents named on the baptismal certificate
- c. The date and place of birth
- d. The name(s) of the sponsor(s), if any
- e. The date and place of baptism
- f. "Received into the Church through parents' Profession of Faith," including date and parish of parent's Profession of Faith, written in the notation column

17.4 SOURCE OF INFORMATION

A baptismal certificate and a birth certificate should be presented to verify the name, parents' names, and place of birth.

18 SPECIAL NOTATIONS IN THE BAPTISMAL REGISTER

Below are special notations that need to be made in the Baptismal Register. Notations should follow the wording presented in the notification letter. (See *Appendix P*)

18.1 RECEPTION OF HOLY ORDERS

Holy Orders is the sacrament that confers ordination as a transitional or permanent deacon, priest, and bishop. The notation will include [type of order (diaconate, priesthood, or episcopacy)], date, and location. (See *Appendix P.7*)

18.2 DISPENSATION FROM HOLY ORDERS

Laicization is the process of returning an ordained person (priest, bishop, or deacon) to the lay state (loss of clerical state). The notation will include the term type of dispensation listed in the decree, [type of order (diaconate, priesthood, or episcopacy)], date issued, and protocol number. (See *Appendix P.9*)

18.3 PERPETUAL PROFESSION IN RELIGIOUS INSTITUTE

This notation is made when a man or woman takes permanent or final lifelong vows to a religious order. The notation will include the “Solemn vows”, name of the religious order, date, and place. (See *Appendix P.8*)

18.4 DISPENSATION FROM RELIGIOUS VOWS

A dispensation from religious vows is the act of releasing a religious man or woman from their permanent or lifelong vows in a religious order. The notation will include the term: “Dispensation from vows”, [protocol number], and [date]. (See *Appendix P.10*)

18.5 VETITUM / MONITUM

A vetitum or monitum is a restriction on a future Marriage until permission is obtained from the local bishop or the pastor. These restrictions are imposed by the Tribunal on one or both parties at the time an affirmative decision is granted in a Declaration of Nullity of Marriage. (See *Appendix P.6*)

18.6 FORMAL WITHDRAWALS FROM THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

In the past, Canon Law made provisions for a baptized Catholic to formally withdraw from the church, but in 2009 the Code of Canon Law was modified to remove all references to the act of formally withdrawing from the Catholic Church.

Therefore, parishes no longer record a formal defection in the baptismal record since this action is no longer recorded.

19 PENANCE/RECONCILIATION

This sacrament pertains exclusively to the internal forum and, therefore, registers are never created nor are certificates of First Reconciliation ever issued.

20 FIRST EUCHARIST RECORDS

Each parish is to keep a First Eucharist Register in the Archdiocese of San Antonio. The notification of sacrament is to be sent to the baptismal parish. (See *Appendix L*)

Proof of the first eucharist is not required to receive confirmation or the sacrament of marriage.

A First Eucharist Register contains the following information:

- a. The baptismal name of the child
- b. The parents named on the baptismal certificate
- c. The date and place of baptism
- d. The date and place of the first eucharist
- e. The name of the minister

20.1 SOURCE INFORMATION

Baptismal Certificate.

20.2 NOTIFICATION OF SACRAMENT

If the person was baptized in the same parish where the first eucharist was received, a notation of the first eucharist is also made in the Baptismal Register. Otherwise, a notice of the first eucharist is to be sent to the parish of baptism. The notification is to include the name of the person, their baptism date and location, and the date and place of the first eucharist.

21 CONFIRMATION RECORDS

Parishes are to maintain Confirmation Registers. (See *Appendix M*)

The following information is to be entered in the Confirmation Register of the parish in which the sacrament was celebrated, not the parish in which the confirmandi were prepared:

- a. The baptismal name of the child or adult, including middle name (for those coming through the RCIA program See *Chapter 16 Sacraments of Initiation Entries* and *Chapter 17 Baptized Christians Received into Full Communion*)
- b. The date and place of baptism
- c. The confirmation name (optional)
- d. The parents named on the baptismal certificate
- e. The name of the sponsor
- f. The date and place of confirmation
- g. The name of the minister

21.1 SOURCE OF DATA

Baptismal certificate.

21.2 NOTIFICATION OF CONFIRMATION

If the person was baptized in the same parish where the confirmation occurred, a notation should also be made in the Baptismal Register.

If the person was not baptized at the same parish where the confirmation occurred, the notification is to be sent to the parish of baptism. The notification is to include the name of the confirmation recipient, date and place of baptism, date, and place of confirmation, and the name of the conferring minister.

For those brought “into full communion in the Church (i.e., Profession of Faith),” the notification is to be sent to the parish where they made their Profession of Faith, if different from the confirmation parish. Their confirmation should then be recorded in the individual’s Baptismal entry.

21.3 JOINT CONFIRMATION CELEBRATIONS

For joint celebrations, the parish hosting the event is required to:

- Enter the names of all those confirmed in their Confirmation Register.
- Issue confirmation certificates for each of the confirmed, and
- Send notifications to the parish of baptism for each of the confirmed.

For the ease of finding these records in the future, parishes who send candidates to another parish should create a cross-reference in their Confirmation Register. The cross-reference is not a duplicate record, but a list of the candidates, the date, place, and minister who conferred the sacrament with a diagonal line through the entry and a note saying, “Recorded at _____ Parish.”

The image shows a handwritten confirmation register with a diagonal line drawn across it. A note is written across the line: "See records at St. Gerard, San Antonio". The register contains the following entries:

Minister	Candidate	Parish
Archbishop Patrick Flores / Bishop Zurek	Delfina Cantu	St. Gerard
3rz, Box 456	Gaspar Cantu	St. Gerard
Poteet, TX. 78065	Arenullo Cantu	St. Gerard
r 2, Box 674	Maria A. Cantu	St. Gerard
Poteet, TX. 78065	Josefina Aleman	St. Gerard
423 Throne	Margarita Aleman	St. Gerard
20 Army, TX	Rosa Guevara	St. Gerard
14-3 Hill	Joe G. Galvan	St. Gerard
20 Army, TX	Vickie L. Roby	St. Gerard
22 Mansion	Eulalio C. Gonzales	St. Gerard

Additional notes in the register include: "Previous True Records held in St. Gerards Parish" and "Josefina Aleman".

21.4 CONFIRMATION DELEGATION/RESCRIPT

When a priest has been granted faculties to confer the sacrament of confirmation by the Archbishop, a notation should be made in the Confirmation Register following the instructions in the delegation/rescript received. (See *Appendix M.2*)

Example: Minister's Name, Special Fac., c.884, §1, date issued.

22 MARRIAGE RECORDS

All marriages (including convalidation) are to be entered into the Marriage Register using the information from the pre-nuptial file which is permanently kept at the parish. (See *Appendix N*)

22.1 MARRIAGE ENTRIES

Data to be entered into the Marriage record:

- a. The full baptismal name of the spouses (the legal name for non-baptized persons)
- b. Full name of both sets of parents (including mother's maiden names)
- c. Full names of witnesses
- d. Name of the officiating minister
- e. Date and place of marriage
- f. Date and place of baptism for both parties
- g. Notations of any permissions, dispensations, and/or delegations obtained for the valid celebration of the wedding (including protocol number).

The information in the prenuptial file is the source for the Marriage Register. The marginal notation column is for the purpose of noting any permission or dispensation and other significant factors (e.g., delegation for the minister, sanation, rescript, decree of dissolution or nullity, or restriction on future marriages). Includes protocol number, diocese, place, and state. (See *Appendix N.1*)

22.2 PRE-NUPTIAL FILES

The pre-nuptial file is to be permanently retained at the parish. The prenuptial file is to be kept in its acid-free envelope or folder, clearly marked with both parties' names, the date of the marriage, and arranged in alphabetical order.

22.3 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION IN THE PRENUPTIAL FILE SHOULD INCLUDE:

- Baptismal certificate issued within the last six months with all notations included for both parties. Baptized non-Catholics should present satisfactory proof of baptism.
- Completed prenuptial questionnaire
- Copy of the civil marriage certificate (in cases of convalidation)
- Any necessary, permission, dispensation, or delegation documents
- Documents of Dissolution or Declaration of Nullity (when necessary)
- Death certificate (when necessary)
- Proof of marriage preparation (certificate or letter)
- Affidavit of Free Status – bride and groom

22.4 RELEASE OF PRE-NUPTIAL FILE

If a legitimate request for a copy of the file is made by an ecclesiastical tribunal, a photocopy or scan of the file should be made, explicitly marked "For Canonical Investigation Only" in red ink, and sent to the requesting tribunal. The original file should be kept at the parish.

22.5 MARRIAGE IN A CATHOLIC CHAPEL OR ORATORY

If the wedding is celebrated in a Catholic chapel or oratory (not a parish church), the sacramental record is entered and kept at the territorial parish within whose boundaries the chapel or oratory is located.

22.6 WEDDINGS WITH A DISPENSATION FROM CANONICAL FORM

A dispensation from canonical form is an exemption of the requirement that the marriage of a Catholic be celebrated before two witnesses and a priest/deacon who has the faculty to assist at marriages. This dispensation can be granted when a Catholic marries a baptized person of another faith or non-baptized person and the marriage is celebrated by the minister of the non-Catholic party, or civil official (e.g., a Catholic marries an Episcopalian in an Episcopal Church by an Episcopalian minister, or to a Jew in a Jewish synagogue by a Rabbi).

If a couple is granted dispensation from canonical form, the wedding is to be recorded in the Marriage Register in the parish of the Catholic party whose clergy prepared the couple for marriage and requested the dispensation. The dispensation will be entered in the notation column in the Marriage Register in the parish and recorded in the office in the diocesan curia. Notification of the marriage must be sent to the parish of baptism of the Catholic party. (See *Appendix N.2*)

22.7 CONVALIDATION

When a couple who has civilly married requests marriage in the Catholic Church, the parish must complete the full pre-nuptial investigation and marriage preparation required for marriage in the Catholic Church.

The source of information for the Marriage Register entry comes from the pre-nuptial file. The civil marriage information must be recorded in the notation column including the date, place, and officiate of the civil ceremony. (See *Appendix N.3*)

22.8 RADICAL SANATION

A radical sanation is the convalidation (without a renewal of consent) of a marriage that is invalid. Radical sanation is granted by the diocesan bishop or his delegate.

When a radical sanation is granted, please follow the instructions outlined in the notice issued by the office in the diocesan curia. Notations will be made in the Baptismal Register of the Catholic party and in the Marriage Register entry that will include: the date, diocese, and protocol number of the sanation. (See *Appendix N.4*)

22.9 CITATIONS IN THE MARRIAGE REGISTER NOTATION COLUMN

The notation column is used to record additional information that is relevant to the marriage. Notations should include the type of notice (delegation, dispensation, dissolution, nullity, decree, or rescript), the date issued, diocese, and protocol number, along with any special instructions. (See *Appendix Q*)

22.10 NOTIFICATION TO CHURCH OF BAPTISM

The sacramental marriage certificate is to be issued as soon as possible after the marriage has been recorded. Notification of the marriage is to be sent to the parish of baptism for Catholic parties. The date and place of marriage is to be recorded in the Baptismal Register even if the place of the baptism is the same as where the marriage took place.

23 ORDINATION REGISTER

Archbishop's delegate shall enter all ordination/reception of Holy Orders (diaconate, presbyteral, and episcopal) within the Archdiocese of San Antonio in the Archdiocesan Ordination Register, which is to be kept in Archdiocesan archives. The entries shall be counter-signed by the Archbishop of San Antonio.

The following information is to be entered into the **Ordination Register**:

- a. The baptismal name of the person ordained
- b. The date and place (including city and state) of baptism
- c. The date and place (including city and state) of ordination
- d. The name of the ordaining minister
- e. The type of ordination

23.1 NOTIFICATION OF ORDINATION TO THE CHURCH OF BAPTISM

Archbishop's delegate must notify the parish of baptism, as soon as possible. This notification is to include the name of the ordained, the date and place of baptism, the date and place of the ordination, the primary ordaining minister, and the type of ordination.

24 DEATH REGISTER

All Catholic funeral liturgies shall be entered in the parish death records.

24.1 DEATH ENTRIES

The Death entry should include the following information:

- a. Full name of deceased
- b. The residential address of the deceased person (optional)
- c. The date and place of death

- d. The date and place of burial (which may be the same as the funeral date)
- e. Name of presiding clergy

Additional information may include the name of the funeral home, next of kin, and cause of death (if known).

Register entries are to be chronologically arranged by the date of the parishioner's death. All individuals buried from a parish, funeral home, or gravesite by a priest, deacon, or delegated minister should be recorded in the parish's Death Register. If the deceased is registered in another parish, a notification may be sent to that parish so a record of death may be recorded in that parish's Death Register also.

If more than one ceremony is administered, such as a funeral service at one parish and memorial service at another, record the service in the corresponding parish registers. (See *Appendix O.1*)

24.2 NON-CATHOLIC BURIALS

A priest presiding at a non-Catholic burial will make an entry in their parish's Death Register. Notate the religion of the deceased and the services provided. (See *Appendix O.2*)

24.3 CREMATION

When the body has been cremated, no reference to the date or place of cremation is made in the Death Register. However, the fact of cremation should be noted, as well as the date and place of the ashes' interment. (See *Appendix O.3*)

25 SUPPORT TO OUR PARISHES

The Archives and Records Management Office is here to assist parishes with any questions related to the care, preservation, or maintenance of their sacramental records. The Archives can assist in assessing records, preservation, and care, they provide routine sacramental records training workshops, and provide guidance on unusual recording situations.

It is prohibited to allow the general public to view sacramental records. Priests and parish staff members are asked to redirect researchers and genealogists to the Archives and Records Management Office. The archives will make available those records which are open to research.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Archives & Records Management Office with any questions or concerns, Archives & Records Management Office, (210) 734-1959, archive@archsa.org or online <http://www.archsa.org/archives>.

26 APPENDIXES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. Delegation Letter	36
B. Dean Parish Inspection Form	37
C. Sacramental Registers Inventory Form	41
D. Authorization for Release of Information Form	43
E. Affidavit for Witness to Baptism	44
F. Affidavit to Paternity	45
G. Affidavit for Witness to Confirmation	46
H. Affidavit for Witness to Marriage	47
I. Sacramental Certificate Examples	48
J. Making Corrections Changes or Additions in Registers	52
K. Baptismal Register Entry Examples	53
L. First Eucharist Register Entry Example	56
M. Confirmation Register Entry Example	56
N. Marriage Register Entry Examples	57
O. Death Register Entry Examples	58
P. Baptismal Register Notification Entry Examples	59
Q. Marriage Register Notification Entry Examples	62
R. Glossary of Terms	64
S. Glossary of Latin Terms	

APPENDIX A: Delegation Letter

Parish Letterhead
with address and other contact information

Date

Full Name of Delegate
Full Address of Delegate

Re: Specific Delegation for Name of Delegate, Position

Dear Name of Delegate:

I, Pastor Name, hereby delegate you Staff member name, in your position as Parish Secretary (or other role/position), to act/sign on my behalf in the following situations:

1. Sign sacramental certificates when I am not available to do so. You will sign your own name on the signature line, then print your name followed by "Delegate of Rev. _____".
2. Make entries in a sacramental register or death register for a sacrament already administered or in the death register for a funeral or graveside service completed.

Only the Pastor has the authority to delegate the duties listed above, therefore, you may not subdelegate or assign your delegated responsibilities to another person.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. _____
Pastor, St. _____

APPENDIX B

Date of Inspection: _____



ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO
Dean Parish Inspection Form

Parish Name: _____

Address: _____

Deanery: _____ Pastor: _____

Years Covered in Inspection: _____ to _____

I. SACRAMENTAL RECORD INSPECTION

Canon 555 §1.3 The dean has the duty and the right: to ensure that religious functions are celebrated according to the provisions of the sacred liturgy; that the elegance and neatness of the churches and sacred furnishings are properly maintained, particularly in regard to the celebration of the Eucharist and the custody of the blessed Sacrament; that the parish registers-are correctly entered and finally, that the parochial house is looked after with care.

YES	NO	All registers are stored in a fire-resistant cabinet/safe that is locked with limited access with room to retrieve without damaging the book? If not, why not _____			
YES	NO	Do they have an up-to-date inventory of registers completed by before an incoming pastor?			
YES	NO	Has a copy been sent to the Archives and Records Management Office?			
YES	NO	Are Mission Registers separate from Parish Registers?			
YES	NO	Do they have all appropriate registers? (Baptism, Register of Catechumens, Book of Elect, First Eucharist, Confirmation, Marriage, and Death Registers)			
Refer to the Sacramental Records Handbook for complete listing what is required in the registers. Please sign and date each register upon completion of inspection.					
BAPTISM REGISTER INSPECTION					
YES	NO	Are all years entered and signed/initialed by Pastor?			
YES	NO	Entries are in an acid-free bound volume?			
YES	NO	Are entries clean of labels, post-it notes, staples, paper clips, or tape?			
YES	NO	Are all entries printed, easy to read and complete? (If a required column is blank, is there a line or written words "none given" written in the column)			
YES	NO	Was there evidence of baptized Christians received into Full Communion in the register? If not, why not?			
What is the general condition of the registers?		EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
Comments:					

APPENDIX B-2

Date of Inspection: _____

FIRST EUCHARIST REGISTER INSPECTION					
YES	NO	Are all years entered and signed/initialed by Pastor?			
YES	NO	Entries are in an acid-free bound volume?			
YES	NO	Are entries clean of labels, post-it notes, staples, paper clips, or tape?			
YES	NO	Are all entries printed, easy to read and complete? (If a required column is blank, is there a line or written words "none given" written in the column)			
What is the general condition of the registers?		EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
Comments:					
CONFIRMATION REGISTER INSPECTION					
YES	NO	Are all years entered and signed/initialed by Pastor?			
YES	NO	Entries are in an acid-free bound volume?			
YES	NO	Are entries clean of labels, post-it notes, staples, paper clips, or tape?			
YES	NO	Are all entries printed, easy to read and complete? (If a required column is blank, is there a line or written words "none given" written in the column)			
YES	NO	If diocesan bishop did not preside, is delegation information included?			
What is the general condition of the registers?		EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
Comments:					
MARRIAGE REGISTER INSPECTION					
YES	NO	Are all years entered and signed/initialed by Pastor?			
YES	NO	Entries are in an acid-free bound volume?			
YES	NO	Are entries clean of labels, post-it notes, staples, paper clips, or tape?			
YES	NO	Are all entries printed, easy to read and complete? (If a required column is blank, is there a line or written words "none given" written in the column)			
YES	NO	Convalidated marriages include information of the civil marriage in the notation column (date, place, and who presided)?			
What is the general condition of the registers?		EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
Comments:					

APPENDIX B-3

Date of Inspection: _____

DEATH REGISTER INSPECTION					
YES	NO	Are all years entered and signed/initialed by Pastor?			
YES	NO	Entries are in an acid-free bound volume?			
YES	NO	Are entries clean of labels, post-it notes, staples, paper clips, or tape?			
YES	NO	Are all entries printed, easy to read and complete? (If a required column is blank, is there a line or written words "none given" written in the column)			
YES	NO	Entries are chronologically arranged by death?			
What is the general condition of the registers?		EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
Comments:					

II. OBSERVATION OF CONDITION AND APPEARANCE OF PROPERTY

This is not the "insurance inspection," but a general observation of the overall condition and appearance of the property.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Church				
Rectory				
Parish Hall				
Parking Lot				
School				
Classrooms				
Other buildings:				

1. Is there any work on one or more of the parish structures which is being planned or in need? If so, explain

2. Are there any additional building or structures that are needed?



Archives & Record Management Office
Archdiocese of San Antonio

SACRAMENTAL REGISTERS INVENTORY FORM

Inventory before a new pastor is assigned to parish.

PARISH/MISSION NAME _____

Inventoried by _____ Year _____

Condition Key: Fair: pages pulling from binding, binding broken; Good: minor wear and tear; Excellent: no problems.
Please keep all documentation for any rebinding/repair work.

	Type of Register	Vol	Section / Vol. # (Combination/Missions)	Date Span	Pages filled	Condition (Fair, Good, Excellent)	Index Yes/No	Notes (damage, special entries, repair work)
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								

Current Location of Books _____

List any books that can be found in a digital database and type of database?

Does your parish maintain a separate Index to this book (i.e. Word or Excel or cards)?

List books backed up with microfilm/digital images:

SIGNATURE of person completing this form: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____ Date: _____



Authorization for Release of Information

I, _____, hereby authorize the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Antonio of Texas to release a copy (or copies) of my:

- School Transcripts
- Sacramental Records

To _____
(First and last name of Person or Name of Organization)

Address of Person/Organization: _____

Address City/State/Zip Code: _____

I hereby represent that all the above information is true and accurate, and I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Antonio, its Bishop and successors in office, the aforesaid parish and all the other persons connected with them from any liability for releasing this information pursuant to my request.

Signature: _____
(Sign in the Presence of a Notary)

Print Name: _____

State of: _____

County of: _____

..... NOTARY ONLY.....

I hereby certify that on this _____ day of _____, 20_____

Personally appeared before me the signer and subject of the above form, who signed or attested to the same in my presence, and presented the following form of identification as proof of his or her identity:

- Driver's License or Govt. Identification Card
- U.S. Passport
- U.S. Military ID Card
- State Identification Card



Notary Public: _____
(Print Name)

My Commission Expires: _____

Notary Public Signature: _____

PLEASE ATTACH COPIES OF IDENTIFICATION WITH FORM. FORM VALID FOR A SINGLE REQUEST.

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Date Received _____	Received by _____
<i>Attach form with a copy of record released and keep until the end of the calendar year + 3 years, then dispose of properly. If for civil record verification, please send form and copy of record released to the Archives and Records Management Office.</i>	



Authorization for Release of Information

I, _____ hereby authorize the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Antonio of Texas to release a copy (or copies) of my:

- School Transcripts
- Sacramental Records

To _____
(First and last name of Person or Name of Organization)

Address of Person/Organization: _____

Address City/State/Zip Code: _____

I hereby represent that all the above information is true and accurate, and I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Antonio, its Bishop and successors in office, the aforesaid parish and all the other persons connected with them from any liability for releasing this information pursuant to my request.

Signature: _____
(Sign in the Presence of a Notary)

Print Name: _____

State of: _____

County of: _____

..... PARISH STAFF ONLY

I hereby certify that on this _____ day of _____, 20_____

Personally appeared before me the signer and subject of the above form, who signed or attested to the same in my presence, and presented the following form of identification as proof of his or her identity:

- Driver's License or Govt. Identification Card
- U.S. Passport
- U.S. Military ID Card
- State Identification Card



Parish Staff Name: _____
(Print Name)

Parish Staff Title: _____

Parish Staff Signature: _____

PLEASE ATTACH COPIES OF IDENTIFICATION WITH FORM. FORM VALID FOR A SINGLE REQUEST.

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Date Received _____	Received by _____
<i>Attach form with a copy of record released and keep until the end of the calendar year + 3 years, then dispose of properly. If for civil record verification, please send form and copy of record released to the Archives and Records Management Office.</i>	



Affidavit of Witness to Baptism

In the presence of Rev. _____,

I, _____, attest that
(Printed name of person providing Affidavit)

Full name of person baptized: _____

Born on: _____ at _____
(City, State)

Full name of father: _____

Full name of mother (including maiden name): _____

Was baptized into the Roman Catholic Church on: _____

At the Church of: _____
(City, State)

Sponsors: _____

Minister of the baptism: _____

I know this because I am (please check all that apply):

- a parent
- a godparent
- a person present at the ceremony
- the minister of baptism

Please describe other information that supports the fact of baptism:

Signature of Affiant Date

Signature of Pastor Date



OFFICE USE ONLY
Date affidavit received: _____
Received by: _____
Parish receiving affidavit: _____
Parish address: _____ _____ _____
Form should be placed in Baptismal Register's Supporting Document File after being updated.



Affidavit of Paternity

Registration of Baptism: Code of Canon Law, c. 877, §2 "If it is a question of a child born of an unmarried mother, the name of the mother is to be inserted if there is public proof of her maternity or if she asks this willingly, either in writing or before two witnesses; likewise, the name of the father is to be inserted if his paternity has been proved either by some public document or by his own declaration before the pastor and two witnesses; in other cases, the name of the one baptized is recorded without any indication of the name of the father or the parents."

In the presence of Rev. _____, _____ Catholic Church

I, _____, attest that I am the biological father of _____ (Printed name of person providing Affidavit)

_____, who was born on _____, in the city and _____ (Name of baptized child) (Date of child's birth)

state of _____ (City, State)

Two Witnesses (Required):

Witness #1 Witness #2
Printed Name: _____ Printed Name: _____
Address: _____ Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

Signature of Witness #1 Date Signature of Witness #2 Date

[] ID provided (Required): Biological father's state ID card, driver license, or US military, OR two forms of other identification. (Please check the box after verifying identity)

Signature of Affiant (Biological father) Date

Signature of Pastor Date



OFFICE USE ONLY
Date affidavit received: _____
Received by: _____
Parish receiving affidavit: _____
Parish address: _____
Form should be placed in Baptismal Register's Supporting Document File after being updated.

APPENDIX G



ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO

Archives and Records Management

2718 W. Woodlawn | San Antonio, Texas 78228-0410 | Phone: (210)734-1959 | Fax: (210) 734-7021 | Email: archive@archsa.org

Affidavit of Witness to Confirmation

In the presence of Rev. _____

I, _____, attest that
(Printed name of person providing Affidavit)

Full name of person confirmed: _____

Baptized on _____ at _____
(Date) (Parish)
(City, State)

Born on: _____ at _____
(City, State)

Full name of father: _____

Full name of mother (including maiden name): _____

Was confirmed into the Roman Catholic Church on: _____

At the Church of: _____
(City, State)

Sponsors: _____

Minister of the confirmation: _____

I know this because I am (please check all that apply):

- ___ a parent
___ a godparent
___ a person present at the ceremony
___ the minister of confirmation

Please describe other information that supports the fact of confirmation:

Three horizontal lines for additional information.

Signature of Affiant Date

Signature of Pastor Date



OFFICE USE ONLY
Date affidavit received: _____
Received by: _____
Parish receiving affidavit: _____
Parish address: _____
Form should be placed in Baptismal Register's Supporting Document File after being updated.

APPENDIX H



ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO

Archives and Records Management

2718 W. Woodlawn | San Antonio, Texas 78228-0410 | Phone: (210)734-1959 | Fax: (210) 734-7021 | Email: archive@archsa.org

Investigation of Marriage - Witness

Full Name of Witness: _____

Address of Witness: _____

Name of Groom: _____

Name of Bride: _____

Location of Event: _____

Date of Event: _____

Name of Minister presiding: _____

Name of sponsors, (commonly the Best Man and Maid of Honor), if known:

Please describe to the best of your ability the event you attended:

What parts of the event that you witnessed, made you believe this was a wedding as opposed to a vow renewal or a blessing of a marriage?

Signature of Witness

Date

OFFICE USE ONLY

Affidavit received by _____

Date: _____

Statement review and instructions for parish



Signature of Vice Chancellor, Date

Marriage entry should appear as: